



NEWS RELEASE

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Contact: Victoria Pipkin-Lane, Green Leadership Awards Project Chair
vpipkin@ceo.lacounty.gov or (213) 974-1361

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County Presents Fourth Annual Green Leadership Awards

Board of Supervisors Recognizes Outstanding “Green Leadership” Projects



LOS ANGELES - On April 24, 2012, the County Board of Supervisors will present its Fourth Annual Green Leadership Awards recognizing outstanding community energy conservation and environmental efforts.

The awards will be presented by Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman, at 9:30 a.m. during the Board of Supervisors meeting, Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 W. Temple St., Room 381-B, downtown Los Angeles.

Recipients of the Green Leadership Awards are:

- **CHAIR:** Melina Sempill Watts, *Coordinator, Santa Monica Mountains Watersheds*
- **BUSINESS:** Waste Management- *Medical Waste Facility Going Greener Every Day*
- **PUBLIC AGENCY:** Long Beach Water Department – *The Lawn to Garden Turf Removal Incentive Program*
- **NON-PROFIT:** Environmental Charter High School – *The Greening of Environmental Charter High School*
- **RESIDENT:** Robert Fortunato – *Green Idea House: A Cost-Effective Net Zero Model*
- **LOS ANGELES COUNTY:** Department of Public Works – *Generation Earth Service Learning Program*

“The County’s Green Leadership Program promotes awareness, responsibility and shares best practices,” said Supervisor Yaroslavsky. “Many individuals, businesses and public agencies within the County are doing an outstanding job in finding creative ways to change the way they do things to improve air and water quality and reduce energy consumption,” he said.

“These committed individuals and entities inspire others to follow their leadership. The County is proud to honor them with its Green Leadership Award,” added Supervisor Yaroslavsky.

The Chair’s Green Leadership Award was selected for the following accomplishments:

Melina Sempill Watts Santa Monica Mountains Watersheds

She worked effectively with stakeholders to reach out to the community and plan and facilitate Malibu Creek Watershed Council meetings, and coordinated and led watershed tours. Ms. Watts wrote and produced an environmental outreach film titled “The Clean Water Act and Our Backyards: Improving Water Quality in the Santa Monica Mountains.”

The longtime resident of Southern California, Malibu area, grew up in Topanga. She is passionate about on-the-ground restoration and continues to work on increasing opportunities to restore creeks, to remove fish migration barriers and to increase the native habitat by nativescaping.

Ms. Watts has written about local environmental concerns for such publications as *The Topanga Messenger*, *The Malibu Times*, *The Acorn* and *PCH Press*. She earned an undergraduate degree in history from UCLA and worked as a creative executive, writing consultant and script analyst at Dreamworks, the Kennedy/Marshall Company, Pico Creek Productions and the Bedford Falls Company.

The Los Angeles County Green Leadership award winners were selected for the following accomplishments:

Waste Management

Medical Waste Facility Going Greener Everyday

The safe and responsible handling of medical waste is essential for the health and protection of our communities and environment. Hospitals and healthcare facilities in Southern California have limited options for processing and disposing of these products. The Medical Waste Facility in Vernon, CA is a model of renewal and sustainability, and is compliant with environmental and safety regulations. The plastic from single-use medical devices and sharps is recycled, the building uses 40 percent less water and is at least 35 percent more energy efficient than conventional buildings of the same size. It is the first such facility in the state to utilize CNG trucks in the collection of medical waste.

The site disposes of trace chemotherapy, pathological, medical, pharmaceutical and sharps waste. The 13,700 square foot facility on 2.3 acres has a capacity to process up to 100 tons of medical waste per day, providing customers with safe, assured treatment of these products in an environmentally friendly way. The facility also has been recognized by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Long Beach Water Department

The Lawn to Garden Turf Removal Incentive Program

Two years ago, the largest and most successful turf removal program in California was started by the Long Beach Water Department to reduce the amount of water used by residents on their landscapes. The goal was to create beautiful gardens throughout the city that reduce urban runoff, require less pesticides and fertilizers and provide a habitat for a wide assortment of native animal species. The program provides an incentive of \$2,500 to residential, commercial, institutional and industrial customers who remove grass landscapes and replace them with water saving gardens.

The program focuses on education through advertisements, public outreach, online websites, customer service and free landscape classes. To date, nearly 600 landscape transformations have been completed and resulted in the removal of more than 1.5 million square feet of water-thirsty grass.

Environmental Charter High School

The Greening of Environmental Charter High School

Today's young people will inherit a world of complex problems, chief among them protecting the environment. The Environmental Charter High School, which opened in 2001, set out to offer an environmentally progressive curriculum where students become active participants in identifying problems and working with staff and the community to develop and implement solutions. This hands-on approach transformed the campus into a green oasis amid concrete and provided students with an opportunity to see the impact of greening initiatives on their own campus.

A team of students and science teachers came up with a cutting edge Science Center that features specially designed windows and lighting that reduce electricity use and maximizes natural light, utilizes a

1,700-gallon, underground water cistern that irrigates the school's gardens and fruit trees, and created a closed-loop aquaponics system that recycles water for fish farming and growing plants. There is a greenhouse powered by rooftop solar energy panels, a "living wall" made of recycled plastic planters attached to the exterior wall of a school building and chickens and rabbits, all maintained by students, provide food and warmth and their waste serves as fertilizer for the plants.

Robert Fortunato

Green Idea House: A Cost-Effective Net Zero Model

The Fortunato family decided to turn the remodeling of their home into a case study in energy efficiency and sustainability that could be replicated by homeowners and small businesses. The project, a partnership with the City of Hermosa Beach, is designed to fulfill a State objective for all new residential construction in California to be zero net energy by 2020. A key motivating factor for the Fortunato family was to demonstrate the ability and technology for anyone to economically build and retrofit with energy efficiency and sustainability in mind. Savings will accrue to persons living and or working in buildings incorporating the techniques and elements, relating energy savings and improved indoor air quality and ultimately decreased societal and environmental costs.

Southern California Edison selected the Green Idea House to be the cornerstone of its net zero energy initiative from design to occupancy. Methods and results are being documented to facilitate the transformation of residential construction to net zero by 2020. The project achieved a 97.5 percent waste diversion rate. Its ongoing collaboration with the City, local experts and the community will influence others to reduce energy, water, waste, toxicity and greenhouse gas emissions.

Department of Public Works

Generation Earth Service Learning Program

In response to a State mandate to educate secondary school aged students on how to protect and improve the environment, the Department of Public Works developed the Generation Earth Service Learning program. Teachers become the vehicle for environmental education by attending a one-day professional developing training session. The service learning component integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities.

Students are engaged in real-life problem solving by identifying environmental concerns on campus, and finding and implementing solutions. The program provides curriculum support, field trip assistance, connection to community resources and assistance to ensure school administration buy-in. Generation Earth serves middle and high schools, both public and private in Los Angeles County. Last year, more than 330 teachers at 217 schools participated in the project.

For more information on the County's Green Leadership Awards, contact Victoria Pipkin-Lane at (213) 974-1361, vpipkin@ceo.lacounty.gov or Mary Savinar at (213) 974-1390, msavinar@ceo.lacounty.gov.

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